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SUBJECT: UNSC CALLS FOR INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY ON
CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

REF: STATE 14292

11. (SBU) SUMMARY. SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) Radhika Coomaraswamy on February 12 urged the Council to implement targeted measures against persistent violators against children. She also called for the Council to add rape/sexual violence as a trigger to list a country in the annexes of the Secretary General's report for the application of the monitoring and reporting mechanism. 42 delegations spoke in addition to Council members. Many delegations echoed the SRSG's requests, and they also called for the inclusion of child protection advisers within UN peacekeeping forces, increased referrals to the ICC, and a focus on reintegration efforts. Russian PR Churkin raised the situation of children in Iraq and Afghanistan, emphasizing the responsibility of all parties, including multi-national forces, to abide by international humanitarian law. Churkin asked the SRSG why her report did not address the death of children caused by private security firms in Iraq. Libyan PR Ettalhi and other Arab delegations focused their comments on Israel and condemned air bombing operations by coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Some nations under review by the CAAC Working Group commented on their status. Council members adopted a PRST at the close of the meeting. END SUMMARY.

SRSG CALLS FOR TARGETED MEASURES

12. (SBU) Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) Radhika Coomaraswamy urged the Council to implement concrete and targeted measures against the 16 persistent violators listed in the annexes of the SYG's report for five consecutive years. She also urged the Council to include rape/sexual violence as an additional trigger to list a country in the annexes for the application of the monitoring and reporting (M&R) mechanism. She viewed this as a first step toward incorporating all six grave violations as triggers. (NOTE: The Council currently uses one grave violation, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as a trigger. The other five grave violations are killing or maiming of children, attacks against schools or hospitals, rape and other grave sexual violence against children, the abduction of children, and the denial of humanitarian access to children. END NOTE.)

13. (SBU) The SRSG highlighted achievements of the past year, including six meetings of the Council's Working Group (WG) on CAAC, trials of offenders in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the de-listing of Cote d'Ivoire from Annex I, and

other steps forward in the Central African Republic, Burma, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Chad, and Colombia. She called for the Council and the WG to adapt to the changing characteristics of conflict, including the rise of non-State actors, use of children in terrorist acts including suicide bombings, impact of collateral damage caused by counter-terrorism strategies, targeting of schools (especially in Afghanistan), use of indiscriminate weapons such as cluster munitions, detention of children for alleged association with armed groups, and increased sexual and gender-based violence.

UNICEF FOCUSES ON REINTEGRATION

¶4. (SBU) UNICEF Executive Director Ann Veneman highlighted UNICEF's efforts to reintegrate children who had been involved in armed forces and groups and called on states to endorse the 2007 Paris Commitments, which addressed reintegration. Veneman urged the Council to address the resurgence of preventable disease in conflict/post-conflict areas due to breakdowns in health facilities. She also condemned the use of cluster munitions and attacks against schools, and she urged the Council to use all grave violations as triggers, especially sexual violence.

WATCHLIST PUSHES FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

¶5. (SBU) Watchlist on CAAC representative Jo Becker urged the Council to hold violators accountable by imposing targeted measures, especially against the persistent violators named in all five of the SYG's reports. She also called for the Council to use all six grave violations as triggers, starting

with sexual violence.

U.S. CALLS FOR DDR FOCUS

¶6. (SBU) Ambassador Wolff urged the Council to continue to focus on Burma, Southern Sudan, Darfur, and Chad, and to continue demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) efforts. He expressed US support for targeted measures against persistent offenders and for the development of action plans to monitor compliance. Wolff noted US disagreement with two areas of the SYG report, arguing that the Council should not have a general policy of referring cases to the International Criminal Court (ICC), and that the WG should allow weapons experts groups to address the issue of cluster munitions. (Reftel).

DELEGATES CALL FOR INCREASED ACCOUNTABILITY

¶7. (SBU) The French delegation, represented by Foreign Minister Kouchner, urged the WG to do more in Sri Lanka, the DRC and Burma. He called for the Council to fulfill its responsibilities and allow the WG to implement targeted measures. Many other delegations warned that the Council's credibility was at stake and urged members to hold violators accountable through targeted measures (including sanctions), action plans, and additional options in the WG toolkit. However, China, Libya, Egypt, and Colombia opposed targeted measures. A large number of delegations, including UK, France, South Africa, and Italy, urged the Council to refer violators who were not persecuted by their national governments to the ICC.

¶8. (SBU) A majority of delegations called for the Council to include sexual violence as a trigger to launch the monitoring and reporting (M&R) mechanism and annexation process, with most noting that this would be a first step toward including all six violations as triggers.

¶9. (SBU) Many delegations called for expansion of reintegration efforts. French Foreign Minister Kouchner said

the next forum on the Paris Commitments (a set of principles aimed at strengthening action on the issue) would take place in September on the sidelines of the UNGA and would focus on reintegration. Japanese PR Takasu said Japan, as initiator of the Friends of Human Security in New York, would integrate the DDR approach into relevant UN policies and programs. Brazilian PR Viotti, joined by El Salvadorean PR Hernandez and Peruvian PR Tincopa, called for the Peacebuilding Commission to discuss concrete DDR measures. A number of delegations, including UK, South Africa, Panama, EU, and Japan called for child protection advisers to be included in UN peacekeeping operations.

¶10. (SBU) Italy, Canada, and Slovenia (on behalf of the EU) called for a new Security Council Resolution. The Slovenian PR recommended the resolution build on the experience of the issue in the Working Group and incorporate the recommendations of the SYG. Italian U/S for Foreign Affairs Craxi recommended incorporating lessons learned into a new resolution, and the Canadian PR requested the expansion of the M&R mechanism to include sexual violence.

¶11. (SBU) Chinese PR Wang, Vietnamese PR Minh, and Indonesian PR Natalegawa called for the Council to address the roots of the conflicts and to focus on peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Wang and Minh urged Council members to recognize the roles of the national governments and engage them in dialogue.

IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN

¶12. (SBU) Russian PR Churkin focused much of his statement on the situation of children in Afghanistan and Iraq and emphasized the responsibility of all parties, including multinational forces, to abide by international humanitarian law. He said that more attention should be paid to Iraq, including the incarceration of children by multinational forces and Al-Qaida's use of child soldiers. He expressed disappointment that the SYG's report did not address children's deaths caused by the private security firms in Iraq. He supported the decision to include the Taliban on the list of violators, which opens the door for a WG review. Libyan PR Ettalhi condemned the effect of air bombing

operations by coalition forces on children in Iraq and Afghanistan and supported a convention banning cluster bombs.

¶13. (SBU) Iraqi PR Al-Beyati indicated children in Iraq have been suffering for decades, first under dictatorship and international sanctions, and now due to terrorist acts. He said protecting children is a priority in Iraq and that Prime Minister Al-Maliki has established a committee to create and implement an Iraqi Child Law. The Afghan PR said increased terrorists attacks against Afghani schools had resulted in 300,000 children being out of school. He urged the international community to focus on poverty alleviation and to help create employment opportunities for youth in Afghanistan.

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

¶14. (SBU) Libyan PR Ettalhi condemned Israeli military operations that he claimed killed more than 500 children in the past year, and he called on the international community to address the situation of children detained in Israeli prisons. Egyptian PR Abdelaziz said Israel should be referred to in the annexes because of its activities in the Palestinian, Lebanese, and Syrian "occupied territories." Permanent Observer of Palestine Mansour said nearly 1000 Palestinian children had been killed since 2000 due to Israeli military assaults, and he noted 67 children had died due to Israel's obstruction of access to Gaza.

¶15. (SBU) Israeli PR Gillerman condemned the use of children in terrorist activities and the targeting of civilians by

Hamas. He underlined the dangers of extremist ideologies and warned against Palestinian attempts to indoctrinate children into terrorism. He was concerned that the methodologies used in compiling the SYG report relied too heavily on unsubstantiated reports, third-party testimonials, and hearsay.

NATIONS LISTED IN ANNEXES

¶16. (SBU) Several delegations from nations under WG M&R made statements to the Council, including the Philippines, Nepal, Uganda, Sri Lanka, Cote d'Ivoire, Burma, and Colombia. The Philippine, Colombian, Nepalese, and Sri Lankan PRs reported actions taken by their governments to address the WG's concerns. Sri Lankan PR Kariyawasam supported targeted measures against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

The Cote D'Ivoire representative praised the WG and the Office of the SRSG for giving his country the opportunity to eradicate the unlawful recruitment and use of children. He promised his country would redouble its efforts on child protection and invited the Council to continue to weigh in on Cote d'Ivoire's progress.

¶17. (SBU) The Burmese and Ugandan PRs protested the inclusion of their nations in the annexes. The Burmese PR claimed that 962 children have been released since 2002. He said they are fully cooperating with Resolution 1612, allowing access to and cooperation with the SRSG and UNCT, and that Member States claims against this were inaccurate. Ugandan PR Lukwiya was angry that his government's efforts to implement the action plan and work with the SRSG had not been recognized, and he threatened to suspend his nation's cooperation with the SRSG if Uganda's concerns were not addressed.

¶18. (SBU) Council members adopted a PRST at the close of the meeting (S/PRST/2008/6). Statements in full can be viewed: www.un.org/Depts/dhl/resguide/scact2008.htm under Meeting Record S/PV.5834
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